

231 Dean St.
Arcata, Ca. 95521

November 12, 1998

Bruce Halstead
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1125 16th St.
Arcata, CA 95521

RE: PALCO's proposed HCP/SYP, especially as it relates to the EIS and EIR

Dear Mr. Halstead:

As you consider economic impacts related to PALCO's HCP and SYP I urge you to pay attention to the impacts logging has, and has had, on the fishing industry. These impacts are inadequately addressed in the EIR and EIS.

While many people have addressed the inadequacy of the HCP and SYP in regards to maintaining and restoring coho salmon habitat in order to preserve this species for future generations, few have addressed these problem as it has affected the fishing industry. Indeed native fish stocks have been decimated to such an extent that preservation and restoration of a once thriving fishing industry can easily be ignored. While we look to the future, however, I believe a guidepost should be the past. I submit the following random samples of references to salmon taken from The Humboldt Times newspaper ("The Fisheries of Humboldt County From 1854 to 1892", a thesis by Humboldt State student Duane L. Wainwright):

Volume I

September 23, 1854

Number 4

Salmon Fishing. - Several companies are forming to catch and put up Salmon on Weott River this fall, for shipment to San Francisco, and other ports. The Weott Fishery alone expect to do a large business at it. The Salmon have commenced running and shortly they will come in quantities, sufficient to give employment to hundreds of men. The resources of our county are not yet developed; we look forward to the day when Humboldt Bay will furnish the markets of the South-Pacific with their fish.

Indian Names - ...Eel River is called by the Indians, Weott - plenty - from the immense quantities of Salmon obtained by them every fall in that stream.

November 13, 1858 (Continued)

Volume 5

Salmon. - For the last few days our Bay has been literally alive with salmon. It is amusing to see them at play, bounding several feet out of the water and darting under again as though they had accidentally "flipped" out of their natural element.

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November 14, 1857

Number 12

Salmon. - Since the rains last week the mouth of Mad River has been opened, and salmon are already very plentiful in the river. S. J. Gilman has brought several loads to market and they are in fine condition.

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December 19, 1857

Number 17

Salmon Fisheries. - Mr. Peter Smith is contributing articles to the California Farmer on the salmon fisheries of this Coast. In one of these articles he says:

"The net spoken of in my last, on Eel river, has actually taken from October 18th to Nov. 5, (in all eighteen days,) 16,000 salmon filling 380 barrels of 200 pounds each; and the balance of three fisheries on the river have had a fair share of success."

The principal fishery on Eel River, referred to, is on the Island near the mouth, and is owned by the Messrs. Dungan. We have frequently noticed the shipment of salmon taken from these fisheries; they are destined to be of considerable importance in this portion of the State.

Volume 4

April 3, 1858

Number 32

Salmon Trade.

It is gratifying to see how the growing importance of the Salmon trade in this county is beginning to manifest itself as a permanent and profitable business. Although but few persons have thus far engaged in it in this county, there is no doubt but the superior quality of Salmon taken from our streams will direct more attention to this branch of trade in future. The Prices Current and Shipping List, published in San Francisco, makes the following remarks, concerning the Salmon trade from which it will be seen our fish are worth \$2 per barrel more than those taken from the Sacramento river:

This important branch of domestic industry, is greatly overlooked by those who attempt to estimate the value of our resources. The statistics of the Custom House for 1857, show that we exported during that year, leaving out of consideration what may have been shipped as unspecified merchandise, 1,180 barrels, 580 casks, 80 tierces, 38 cases, 116 kegs, 131 miscellaneous packages, and 8 tons in bulk of salmon. Far the greater part of these exports were made to Australia, where sales were made at a handsome profit, in a number of instances at 11 to 12 cents per pound.

At present the rates rule higher than for some months previously. During the fall of last year, they were in the neighborhood of \$8 per barrel for Sacramento, \$10 for Humboldt, and \$11 for Oregon. The demand for export having latterly much increased, there has been an advance of full \$1 per barrel.

April 3, 1858 (Continued)

Volume 4

These facts are highly gratifying in view of the consideration that until recently we have been importing salmon from the East. That trade has ceased altogether, and now, instead of shipping the article to California, they are receiving a portion of their supplies from this quarter.

The following computation was made and furnished to the S.F. Times, by a salmon fisherman, from which it will be seen our county furnished more salmon the past season than was taken from the Sacramento river - Eel river alone, furnishing 1,200 barrels, without making mention of what was put up on Mad river:

The quantity of salmon caught and packed last season was, as near as I can ascertain, as follows: On Eel river, 1,200 barrels; on the Sacramento, 1,200 barrels; on the Columbia, 500 barrels; at Vancouver Island, 400 barrels; making a total of 3,300 barrels, averaging about 100 pounds weight each. In this estimate I do not include the fresh fish sent to market, nor the quantity cured by smoking, which would increase the amount fully one third. The prices obtained are from eight to ten cents per pound. A shipment of some 300 packages to Australia, on the What-Cheer in October last, brought, the 50 and 100 pound packages, 12 cents per pound; the 150 and 200 pound packages, eleven cents per pound. The fish caught in our waters are the finest in the world, and as we are now able to cure them as well as elsewhere, we shall have no competition in supplying all the markets of the Pacific, while the taking and preparing of the fish will give employment to a large number of hands; thus augmenting our infant commerce, and adding materially to the wealth of our people.

When I moved here nearly 30 years ago the fishing industry was the second largest industry in Humboldt County. Salmon fishing was a major component of this industry. While the decline of this industry is due to a variety of causes, the ones which you clearly need to address are timber industry impacts - including the inadequacies of the buffer zones around fish-bearing streams and clearcutting on steep slopes and in sensitive areas that can result in sediment flows to these fish-bearing streams and rivers.

Sincerely,

Nancy R. Ihara

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